

"A LOT OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE UK ARE A BIT SPOILT"

Katja Kuznetsova, a student from Belarus, gives her impressions of young people in the UK. Below, two MYPs give their response.

I have been in the UK for a year, and nearly from the very beginning I was surprised by the level of people's, especially young people's, dissatisfaction with their lives. Whenever I say how much I like the country, I never hear "Oh, I love it too!" if the person I am talking to is British and under 25. I am not sure whether it's a lack of patriotism (which I actually doubt, considering the support the national football team always gets), or just a new fashion trend to be unhappy about everything.

Whatever it is, I think that a lot of the young people in the UK are a bit spoilt by what they have and cannot appreciate the benefits of living in this country, cannot appreciate the whole range of opportunities open to them in life, opportunities that their peers in other countries may not have access to.

In my country Belarus, our salaries are 90% less than the UK, yet prices for goods and services are not much different. In my country, if your views do not match the state ideology, you can find yourself as being unemployable, as more than 75% of all jobs are in state-owned organisations. In my country, people get married to be able to get a U.S. work

visa, which is unavailable to those that are young and single. Those are just a few of the problems we have, but the young people never give up and keep trying to change something – if not about the country, but about their lives.

In the West, it has become very popular to complain: about the prices, about education, about the Government. It seems like the wealthier a country is, the less its young people are willing to do anything; while in less fortunate countries they know they can only rely on themselves and therefore work harder and often achieve more than their fellows from Western Europe.

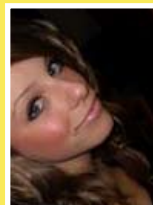
Maybe, when you are given too many opportunities, you just keep postponing any actions, thinking that you still have got plenty of time and you will always be able to catch up. Like the Londoners that have never been to the Tower or the National Gallery just because they can go there any time. I don't know the right answer, but I know that in my country young people don't postpone their lives in a hope that someone will turn up and make the world perfect.

Katja Kuznetsova



"Although it is fair to say that some young people in the UK are spoilt, it is not the case for the majority of the population. People might complain, but surely if we do not kick up a fuss then we won't get things changed? If UKYP had not complained about the atrocious state of SRE in schools then the government would never have changed its policies! Young people do want their voices heard and do want things to change for themselves and for others. We are definitely not a spoilt generation."

Jacob Rix, MYP for Norfolk



"I think that young people in Western Europe often take things for granted, and do have a tendency to complain about

small problems. I think that we should appreciate the little things, such as the fact that our average pay salary is 90% more than in places such as Belarus. I think if young people saw some of the conditions other young people live in around the world then we would appreciate the luxuries we receive on a daily basis." **Sarah Baldwin, MYP for Leeds**